1: Hoebel E-5 (1933) 1940 NO6 Comanche NO6

175 stated that in 1744 thirty-three Frenchmen visited the Comanches on the R. Jicarilla at the head of the Canadien; east of Taos, and traded them guns. A few years later we read in the Texas Annals that the Comanche are pressing down to Red River, forcing the Lipans into Texas.[3]

Nevertheless, Comanche contacts with the southwest and Texas were merely peripheral at this early date. Archaeology,[4] native tradition, and the evidence of cultural and linguistic analysis all combine to indicate a more northerly location for the Comanches of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Comanches are clearly an offshoot of the northern Shoshoneans.

197 The languages of the Comanche and northern Shoshone are mutually intelligible, the differences being found in slight phonetic shifts, not in grammatical morphology. Together with the Gosiute and Shikaviyam tongues of the peoples of the Great Basin, the Shoshonean and Comanche speech form the *Plateau Shoshonean* of the great Uto-Aztekan linguistic stock.[5] The Comanche speech points to a northern identity.

●173 Ancient traditions of the Flathead Indians in the north define the presence of Shoshonean tribes far east of the Rocky Mountains in the territory of the upper Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers. This was for the period preceding the eighteenth century. The Shoshoneans mentioned were probably the forebears of the Comanches.[6]

174 Shoshone and Comanche legends retain the tradition of the separation. The culture of the Comanche tribe in the third quarter of the nineteenth century—the period from which the materials of this study derive—was a growth developing from the Shoshonean base under the impact of new influences met with on the Plains and in the Southwest.

First among these influences were war and the horse. Aggression from the northeast and the lure of trade and loot in the southwest drew the Comanches to the Spanish frontier, where they became one of the earliest tribes to acquire horses. By adjusting itself to a horse and buffalo economy, Comanche society attained a mobility and plentitude unknown to the northern Shoshones. Fortified with these resources and ultimately with guns, stiffened

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[3] G. B. Grinnell, *Who Were the Padoucas?* (American Anthropologist, vol. 22, 1920), p. 260.

[4] W. D. Strong, *Plains Culture in the Light of Archaeology* (American Anthropologist, vol. 35, 1933), pp. 271-287.

[5] Edward Sapir, *Southern Paiute, A Shoshonean Language* (Proceedings, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, vol. 65, No. 1, 1930), pp. 5-6.

[6] J. A. Teit, *The Salishan Tribes of the Western Plateau* (Report, Bureau of American Ethnology, vol. 44, 1928), pp. 304-305.

2: Lee T-5 (1855-1858) 1957
NO6 Comanche NO6

775 ing and undoubting faith in a future state of existence, and in future rewards and punishments. They hold that the soul of the wicked coward or thief, after death, will be driven before the frown of the Great Spirit, afar off into a region barren and cold and desolate, there to wander forever through thorns and among rocks, thirsty, hungry, and in pain; but the good Indian, who has been brave in battle and walked uprightly among his tribe, will be translated to a valley ten thousand times ten thousand fold longer and wider than their own valley of Mannasaw, where the climate is always mild as it is in the moon of plants; where there is cool water, and pounded corn and mustang meat forever at his hand, and where buffalo and deer abound, and the horses are fleeter than the wind.

[173] They have many traditions but no records; nevertheless, 212 they have certain hieroglyphics by which they contrive to communicate intelligence with as much accuracy as if they understood the epistolary art. For instance, if one party goes out before another has returned, and wishes to convey information of the course they have taken and the business they are upon, they will seek some point where it is probable their trail will be discovered. Here, providing themselves with a thin piece of birch bark, which can be folded in the form of a letter without breaking, they will make such figures and emblems upon it as represent the idea they wish to convey. If they are on the war path, the character will be a tomahawk and a scalp; if on a visit to a friendly tribe, it will be a pipe; if on a buffalo or deer hunt, there will be no characters, but the folded bark will simply enclose some of the hair of the animal of which they are 212 in pursuit. If they intend to be absent a month, the emblem 201 will be the full moon; if two weeks, a half-moon, if only a few days, the new moon. Then they strike a hatchet deep

2: Lee T-5 (1855-1858) 1957
NO6 Comanche NO6

157 624 551 Se-ma-naw, the youngest wife of the civil chief, possessed a cheerful and lively disposition, always frolicsome as the young antelope of the prairie. She was the daughter of the war chief of the tribe, *Sa-was-saw*, the Bear, and niece of An-a-wak-ke-o, who was her father's sister. The name of the prophet was *Han-na-nos-ka-a*, signifying the wisest of the wise.

622 157 The Rolling Thunder possessed a remarkably inquisitive mind, and was, moreover, extremely sociable. In the course of his life, he had several times crossed the borders of the Indian territory into Mexico, and had some faint notions of civilization—just enough to excite his curiosity. Hour after hour he would converse with me in his tent about the manners and customs of the whites. On these occasions, I endeavored to illustrate, in the best possible manner, their superiority and power. With a piece of charcoal, I would sketch on a sheet of birch bark the figure of a ship, "with wings whiter than a swan's and wider than many eagles"—its masts taller than the tallest cedar on the mountains—representing it as capable of carrying more than a thousand pack mules could bear; that in this great canoe, the white man would sail away over the salt water, beyond the sight of land, to a vast continent, distant more than a hundred days' journey to the east. He had never seen the ocean; nevertheless, he comprehended its vastness through [173] the traditions of his fathers, who once dwelt upon its shore; but no logic could convince him that the mighty land beyond it was a part of this globe; his reasoning leading him irresistably to the conclusion that it must necessarily belong to another planet. When I told him the earth was round like a ball, and on the opposite side were extensive countries and millions of people—that if we could bore a hole through it directly beneath our feet, we would emerge into

823

13: Simmons H-4 (no date) 1967 NO6 Comanche NO6
(1785-1819) New Mexico

175 726 Because of their courage in battle, the Comanches even won, with certain reservations, the grudging respect of the Anglo-American settlers in Texas. After a fight in 1859, Captain E. K. Smith wrote that "the Comanches fought without giving or asking quarter until there was not one left to bend a bow, and would have won the admiration of every brave soldier of the command but for the intrusive reflection that they were the murderers of the wives and children of our frontiersmen, and the most wretched of thieves."[1]

175 175 101 The general outlines of Comanche history are well known. Members of the tribe first appeared in the Spanish settlements of northern New Mexico soon after 1700. Prior to that time they seem to have dwelled in the plateau and basin country west of the Rockies in parts of present Colorado, Utah and Wyoming. In those early years they apparently formed a single tribe with the Shoshones.

173 According to a native tradition, all the Shoshones were camped together along a river when the young son of a chief was accidentally killed during a kicking game. The incident stirred up bitter feelings, so that the camp broke into two factions. To avoid open hostilities, one group moved north, the Shoshones proper or Snakes, while the people who remained behind eventually drifted east and became the Comanches.

175 101 In the seventeenth century, the Comanches in their several bands probably inhabited the parks just back of the Front Range in Colorado and the country as far as the valley of the North Platte. James

21: Burnet T-5 (1818-1819) 1951 NO6 Comanche NO6
Texas

[ca. 1818]

they would be in no wise dangerous. But how inadequate is an infant, dispersed, and unorganized settlement, to repel the sudden incursions of an enemy who move with unequalled celerity, and almost inscrutable caution: who traverse the pathless wilderness by day, and pounce on their devoted victims in the unguarded hour of midnight. The national faith and friendships of savages are proverbially treacherous, and are always subordinate to their own weak conceptions of interest, or the more imperative suggestions of fear. The hope of spoil for the most part constitutes their *prium mobile* to hostilities: but they are sometimes capable of adventuring the hazards of battle for the single purpose of revenging real or imaginary injuries.

The Comanchees or I-etans as they are sometimes called, are one among a very few of the primitive nations of Spanish America, who have preserved their pristine independence. To what cause this singularity is attributable, it is difficult to determine. Their oral history is extremely limited and imperfect, and they appear to retain no recollections of a period when their political condition was materially different from what it now is. Of their origin they know nothing. A regular tradition or national legend, seems never to have entered into the policy of these erratic sons of the forest. Careless of the future, they are indifferent to the benefits that accrue from the recollections of the past. The revolving day imbodies all their concerns. Their songs, which are few and of little variation, however ancient they may be, are rather didactic than historical, and are calculated to fire the warriors zeal, or to give solemnity to funeral lamentations. It is however, presumable, that their wandering mode of life and the remoteness and seclusion of the country through which they have ranged time immemorial, have mainly contributed to perpetuate both the identity and the independence of a tribe, whose numbers and capacities for war, are far inferior to others of their proscribed race, that have become almost or quite extinct, by the deleterious spread of a corrupt and unsocial civilization.

/page 36 continued/

C K 665 If the present factions are not determined by the acculturationist vs. traditionalist split, the split still exists in the realm of value judgement. Exactly what role it does play must be examined still further. The differences between the Kiowas and Comanches seem to be continuances of earlier pre-contact differences. But to pursue this is to get onto very precarious ground.

C K 665 829 Conversations on the subject of the factioning with informants both Peyotist and Christian yield two conflicting views. One is that there has always been factionalism and that the tribes will never learn to cooperate unless things unforseen come to pass. The other is that the older generation, now inactive, was not plagued by the dissension which exists among the leaders today. Arguments may be advanced to support both theories.

C K 648 193 101 K 648 193 101 C K 665 621 C K 648 665 621 As far back as the history of the tribes can be traced there are stories of splits and dissensions. The Comanches recall that they were once Shoshones. The stories of the split vary but generally it is believed that there was some disagreement. The Kiowas also have a tradition of a northern origin and a split although it is more difficult to reconcile with what the books say. According to the older Kiowas, the Crows and Kiowas were once the same people. They maintain that they can understand the Crow language fairly well and there is considerable visiting between the two groups today. In pre-reservation days dissensions and splits did not paralyze the activities of the tribe. People could split off from one band and join another. The success of tribal life did not depend upon cohesion and cooperation. But with the advent of the reservation and settlement in one place with sustained relations with the United States government this tendency to split became more and more painful. One could not move for one thing. And the dealings with the outside world demanded a concerted effort on the part of the tribes to achieve success.

31: Jones E-5 (1967-1970) 1972 NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

Comanche Origin

174 The Comanches' emergence probably occurred on the eastern fringes of the Basin area, somewhere in the vicinity of southwestern Montana and northwestern Wyoming. The specific area of Comanche birth would be impossible to pinpoint; however, judging from the range of the eastern Shoshone, the origin tales of the Comanches, and the Spanish records of New Spain, it can be suggested that the area of Wyoming between the Yellowstone and Platte Rivers may come close to defining the general vicinity of Comanche origin.

173 The most commonly recorded tale of Comanche origin tells of a dispute which arose among a large group of Indians who were traveling in the northwestern Wyoming area. Two factions of this group disagreed over the division of a game animal, usually identified as a bear. As a result, they separated. One group went north, and this group is now identified as the Shoshone. The other group turned south and east, and the tale states that this group was the Comanche.

The following is Sanapia's version of the origin of the Comanches. I include it here because it is an explanation of Comanche origin which to my knowledge has never been recorded and also because it illustrates a significant point with reference to Sanapia. The core reason for the eventual fracturing of the main group is attributed to disease. This type of explanation would seem most relevant to Sanapia as a doctor. This tale was taught to Sanapia by her mother, who in turn learned it from her father.

There was lots of groups of them at that time . . . by the thousands, here and there, just like that. They be on a river, east of those big mountains . . . Wyoming, I guess. This whole army of Indians, mens, womens, and childrens. 173 Somehow, I don't know how, they got a big sickness. It was this polio . . . some- 164 thing like that stuff, I think. Did you ever hear the like of that? It just twist their arms and their legs this way and that way. It twist their necks too. They act like that for about five minutes, and they just die. If they walking, fall right over 173 and die where they are. The bottom of that place where they were camping was just full of dead peoples. So this man, like a chief or something, got on his horse and rode around the camp and he was talking loud, you know. He said, "I want you all, this group, go south as far as you could go. If you don't, you are going to all die out soon." Then they all got on their horses with their wives and childrens and just left their tepee there or what they living in, them days. They just took out carrying nothing except their knives. They didn't even have nothing to carry water in. So that big camp went south just as far as they could go. Then that man said to some other people, "Now you all go west . . . right straight west just as far as you can go. When you come to the big mountains just go on the other side if you could get over. You other group, go northwest, way up that way. It'll be alright." And so they scattered like that . . . all those ways. Some of them was left and they said, "We going east." The chief said, No, don't go that way. That's white people's land. They be up that way when you get over there. They going to kill you all. You all go west just so far. When you hit a river just live there." So these other folks went southwest from there and northwest. They all scattered and went like that. These other ones that didn't believe him, well, they just died. Their bodies were everywhere. So lot of them end up in the mountains. Bunch went into Wyoming, I guess, and

31: Jones E-5 (1967-1970) 1972 NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

another bunch went back into Texas somewhere, and they all went separate there. And now these, I forgot what their name is . . . way up in southwest of California, I think. Well, they talk like us. I don't know their white man name but us Indians call them *sɔkai*. That has meaning of "red Comanches." That's what their name is. Then over there in Utah there's a bunch talk like us, and they talk easy, slow, say every word like us Comanches. They call us word means something like "they come from hot country." You know, some folks tell you that Comanches come from Mexico, but it ain't true. Comanches been here and there but they come from up north somewhere. My folks, as far as they can remember, come from Colorado near Denver somewhere, but it wasn't no Denver in them days. The army run my folks and their folks in Oklahoma, but we didn't belong here way back. We from Colorado. That's where my father's father was killed by them Utes. I still know that country from what the old people told me and what I ask them.

Migrations

In the late 1600s the Comanches began to migrate southward into contact with the Spanish settlements of New Spain and east onto the Plains. The Comanches most likely moved south to be nearer a source of horses, which they first acquired raiding with the Utes in northern New Mexico. The first large group of Comanches appeared in the New Mexico area around 1705. In the succeeding ten or fifteen years, with the Utes, they were constant sources of harassment to the Spanish settlements in the area. In approximately 1726, the Comanches, perhaps feeling their new power with the acquisition of the horse, turned on their former allies, the Utes. Many of the war stories told by Sanapia and some of my older Comanche informants tell of horse-raiding expeditions against the Utes.

In the early eighteenth century the Comanches began to expand to a greater degree onto the Plains. The contraction of the pedestrian Dismal River culture in the central Plains around 1725 is attributed by some authors to the energized predatory equestrian Comanche people. By the middle of the eighteenth century the Comanches had established themselves as a real threat to the Spanish settlements in New Mexico. At first, however, the Spanish policy toward the Comanches was relatively long-suffering because the existence of the mounted and war-like Comanches acted as a protective barrier on New Spain's eastern frontiers against intrusion from that direction by large numbers of French and English. During this period, however, the Comanches made treaties with certain tribes to the north who were sympathetic to the French, and thus French traders began to supply the Comanches with firearms, a trade item which the Spanish had always feared to release to the Comanches. In the late eighteenth century the dangerous situation provoked by the Comanche's acquisition of guns stimulated the Spanish to send military forces against the Comanches, whose center at that time was in southeastern Colorado. In approximately 1790 the northern Comanche bands, perhaps responding to the military pressures imposed by the Spanish, made an alliance with the Kiowa, an alliance which was never broken.

In 1820 Major Long encountered a large camp of Comanches on the upper great bend of the Arkansas River. Prior to this time the Comanches had little

35: United States W-4 (no date) 1974
N06 Comanche N06
Oklahoma

COMANCHE TRIBE

Caddo, Comanche, Cotton, Grady, Kiowa, Tillman, and Washita Counties, OKLAHOMA
Tribal Headquarters: Anadarko, Oklahoma 73005

101

Federal Trust Area

659
161

Population: 3,300 (BIA 11/72)

LAND STATUS Total Area: 234,299.45 acres (three tribes) 659
Tribally Owned: 4,373.41 acres 423
Allotted: 229,926.04 acres
(Acreage by individual tribes is not available. Total includes all three tribes.)
Owned Jointly With the Kiowa and Apache Tribes of Oklahoma. (648)
This land is held in trust by the United States under the act of June 24, 1946.

HISTORY AND CULTURE

The Comanche are of the Shoshonean linguistic group. In 1719, they were mentioned as living in what is now western Kansas. Legends indicate that the Comanche may have had horses before the Spanish arrived. Where they obtained them is not known. The horse changed the Comanche's mode of living into a nomadic one. They made little agricultural use of the land and lived in easily transportable tepees. Long known as the finest horsemen of the plains, they had a reputation for courage in battle when facing great odds. They were traditionally hunters. Their diet consisted of game meat, berries, edible roots, but mainly the buffalo, whose skin the Comanche used for clothing, bedding, and shelter.

197 175 131 173 231 178 361 311 181 703 262

For nearly 2 centuries they were at war with the Spaniards in Mexico and raided Mexican settlements as far south as Durango and Zacatecas. Generally friendly to the Americans, they were bitter enemies of the Texans who had dispossessed them of their best hunting grounds. They waged relentless war against them for almost 40 years. Around 1795, they became close confederates of the Kiowa and also allied themselves with the Apache.

175 648

Several treaties were consummated between the United States and the Comanche Tribe between 1834 and 1875. In the treaty of 1867 the Comanche, along with their allies, the Kiowa and Apache Tribes, were assigned a tract of land in Oklahoma containing 2,968,893 acres. Individuals were allotted 160 acres each.

(651)